

Sonnet Scroll

I Give Poetry Writing Assignments to My Class, in January 2025

By Susan Donnelly

First, you are to write what keeps you warm,
despite the headlines on these chilling days,
in which the whole Republic's being razed
and every safety vilified as harm.
I've often found some comfort in a form,
I note, so try the sonnet's ways.
Its sturdy certainty through any maze
might give directions to what's left of home.

I watch you set out with your usual zeal
searching your hearts, following each rule,
then realize how *you* warm *me* when I teach,
that a sonnet is itself a kind of school,
where rhyme and metre bring us what we feel,
when love in prose is sometimes hard to speak.